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SITE VISIT
RICO-ARGENTINE MINE
RICO, COLORADO
TDD #R8-8408-17

EPA REGIONAL SITE PROJECT OFFICER: THOMAS STAIBLE
FIT PROJECT OFFICER: MARGARET BABITS

SUBMITTED TO: KEITH SCHWAB - FIT RPO
DATE SUBMITTED: OCTOBER 18, 1984

HAZARDOUS
SITE CONTROL



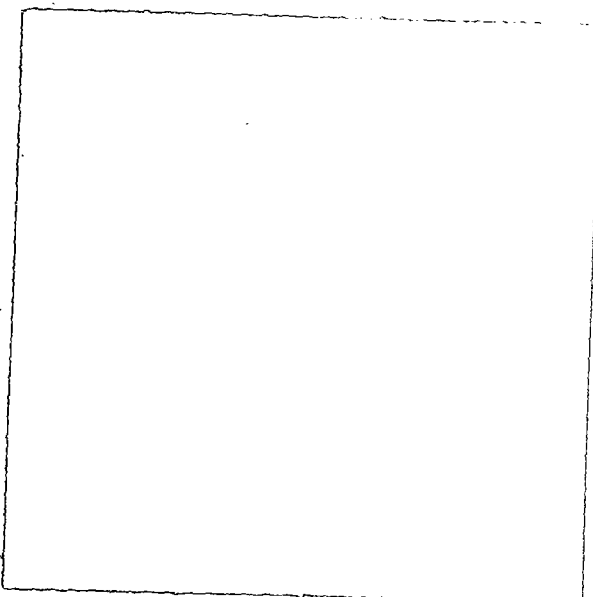
DIVISION

Remedial
Planning/
Field
Investigation
Team
(REM/FIT)
ZONE II

CONTRACT NO.
68-01-6692

CH2M HILL

Ecology &
Environment



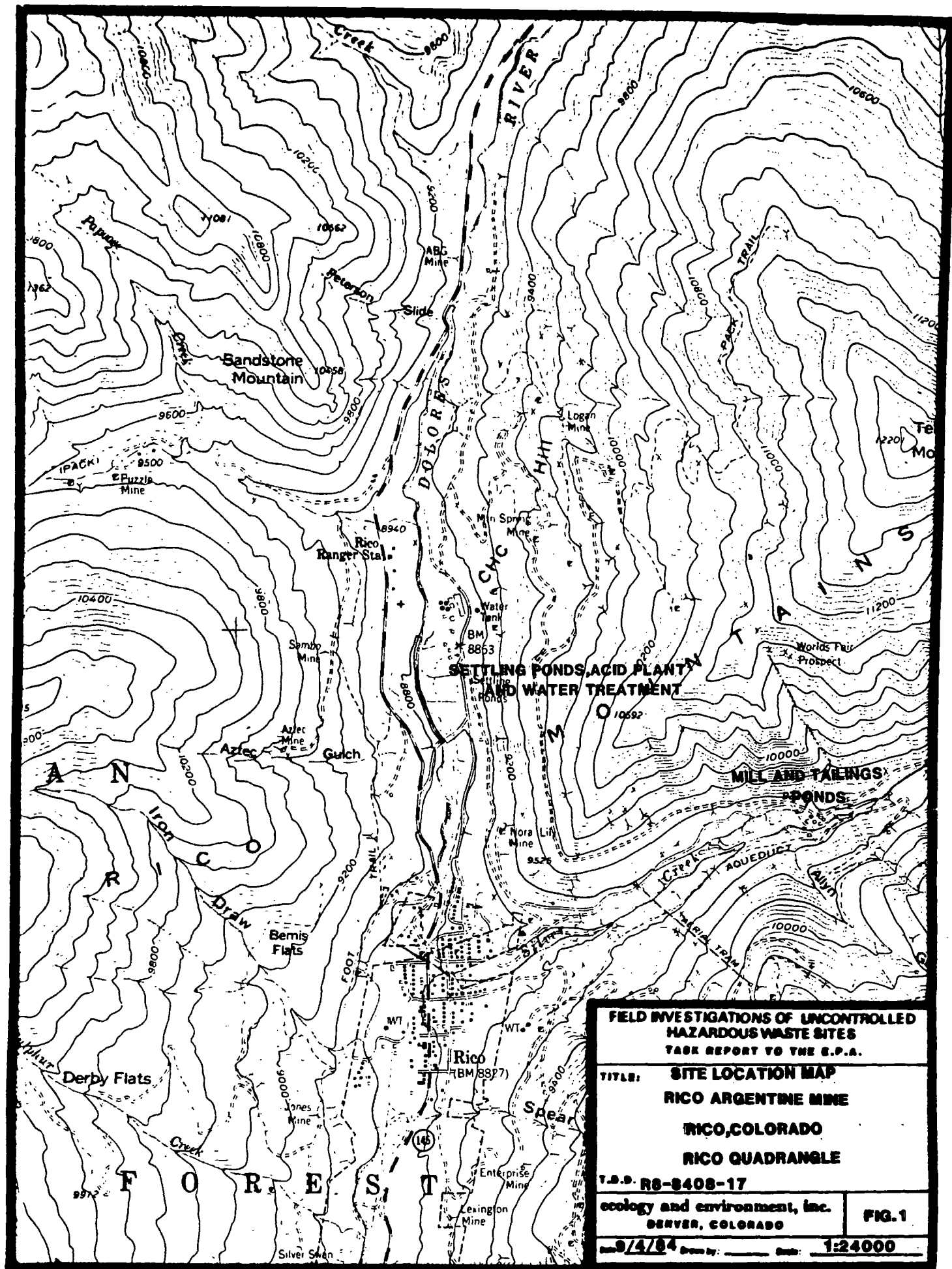
SITE VISIT
AT THE
ANACONDA MINERALS COMPANY
RICO - ARGENTINE MINE
TDD #R8-8408-17

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Technical Directive Document (TDD) R8-8408-17, Ecology and Environment's Field Investigation Team, (FIT) visited the Rico-Argentine Mine near Rico, Colorado (Figure 1). At 0850 hours on Wednesday, October 10, 1984, FIT members Meg Babits, John Stetson and David Stoner met with Bob Dent of Anaconda Minerals Company. The intent of this visit was to determine sampling locations for a future sampling trip. Photographs taken during the visit are included in Appendix A.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

The Rico - Argentine Mine is an inactive operation and is located one mile north of the town of Rico, Colorado. The mine is located in portions of Sections 24 and 25, Township 40 North, and Range 11 West. Operations consisted of a mill and tailings ponds near Silver Creek and an acid plant and cyanide heap leach and settling ponds along the Dolores River. There were two discharge points associated with the operation. Discharge point 001 was the discharge from the Blaine Tunnel on Silver Creek. There is no longer discharge from 001 and the water is redirected underground to the St. Louis Tunnel where it drains into the St. Louis Settling Pond System on the Dolores River. The outfall of the final pond is discharge point 002 (Figure 2).



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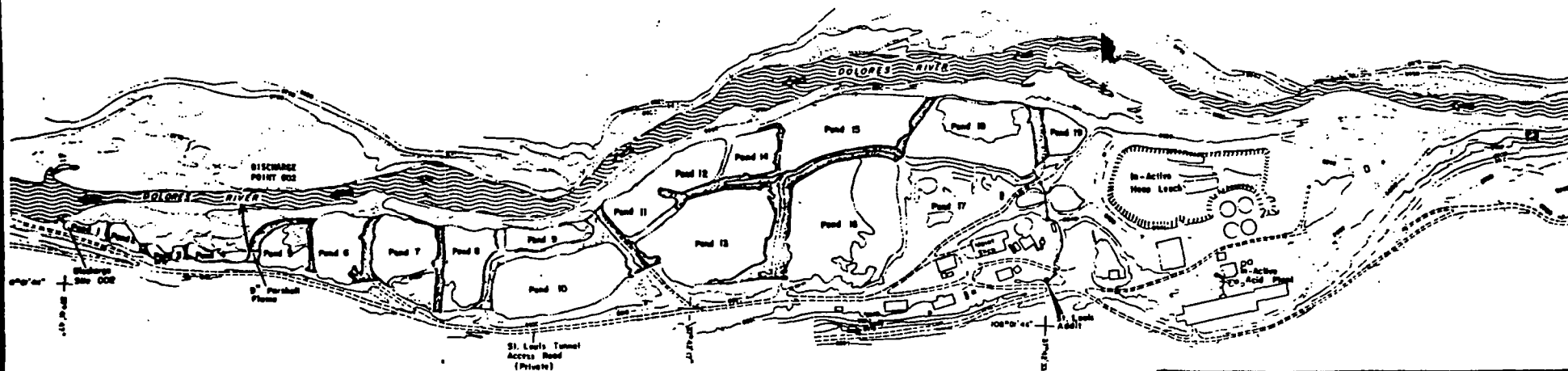
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**FIELD INVESTIGATIONS OF UNCONTROLLED
HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES
TASK REPORT TO THE E.P.A.**

**TITLE:
ST. LOUIS SETTLING POND SYSTEM**

taken from:

**ANACONDA COPPER COMPANY
T.S.D.**

**ecology and environment, inc.
DENVER, COLORADO**

FIG.2

Date _____ Drawn by: _____ Scale: _____

In April of 1984, Anaconda Minerals put into affect water treatment operations at the St. Louis adit. The operation consists of neutralization using slaked lime.

The city of Rico has their drinking water supply on Silver Creek above the major mining impacts. The water is treated through infiltration galleries and chlorinated.

Although Mr. Dent did not know if wells existed on site, the FIT identified two piezometers which were located between the Silver Creek tailings ponds and Silver Creek. Further investigation by Mr. Dent revealed that these were installed by Dames and Moore for geotechnical studies. The studies were to be used to assess the stability of the ponds and to assess the enlarging of the ponds.

APPENDIX A

Color Photo(s)

The following pages contain color
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PHOTO 1: SILVER CREEK IN FOREGROUND AND BLAINE TUNNEL IN BACKGROUND. NOTE DISCHARGE FROM BLAINE TUNNEL INTO SILVER CREEK.



PHOTO 2: SILVER CREEK ABOVE BLAINE TUNNEL.
NOTE LACK OF IRON STAINING ON ROCKS.



PHOTO 3: SILVER CREEK BELOW BLAINE TUNNEL.
NOTE IRON STAINING ON ROCKS.

PHOTO 4: (RIGHT) LOCATION OF THE TOWN OF RICO'S DRINKING WATER SUPPLY FROM SILVER CREEK ABOVE BLAINE TUNNEL AND ABOVE MOST MINING ACTIVITY.

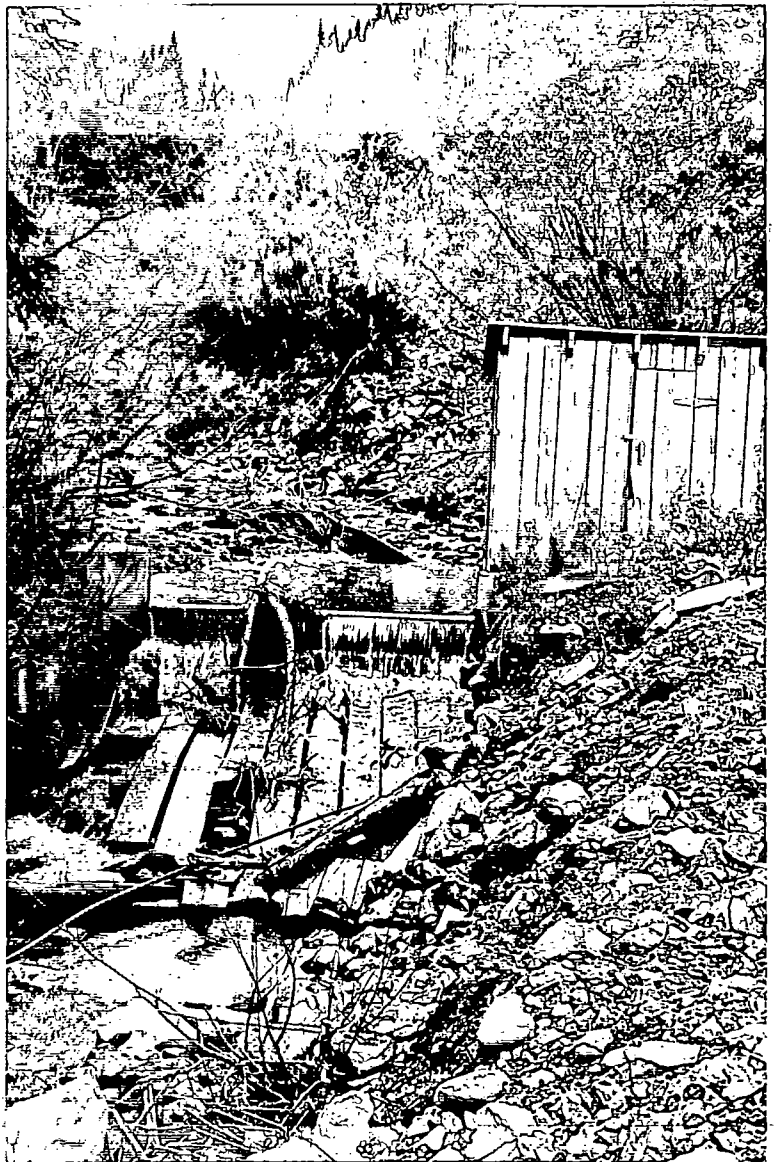


PHOTO 5: (BELOW) SLOPE STABILIZATION ON SILVER CREEK EMBANKMENT BELOW BLAINE TUNNEL. TAILINGS PONDS OF RICO-ARGENTINE MINE ARE TO THE RIGHT.





PHOTO 6: THE INACTIVE RICO-ARGENTINE MILL IN THE SILVER CREEK AREA.



PHOTO 7: VIEW OF RICO-ARGENTINE'S UPPER TAILINGS PONDS LOOKING FROM THE MILL.



PHOTO 8: (ABOVE) RICO-ARGENTINE'S
LOWER TAILINGS PONDS.
SILVER CREEK IS TO THE
LEFT.



PHOTO 9: (RIGHT) RUNOFF FROM
RICO-ARGENTINE'S
LOWER TAILINGS POND.



PHOTO 10: MERGING OF RICO-ARGENTINE'S LOWER
TAILINGS POND RUNOFF AND SILVER
CREEK.

PHOTO 11: (RIGHT) THE ST. LOUIS
ADDIT WHICH RECEIVES
DISCHARGE FROM BLAINE
TUNNEL THROUGH THE
UNDERGROUND ST. LOUIS
TUNNEL SYSTEM. THE
ADDIT IS IN THE
DOLORES RIVER AREA.



PHOTO 12: (BELOW) MILK OF LIME BEING
ADDED TO THE ST. LOUIS
ADDIT DISCHARGE.



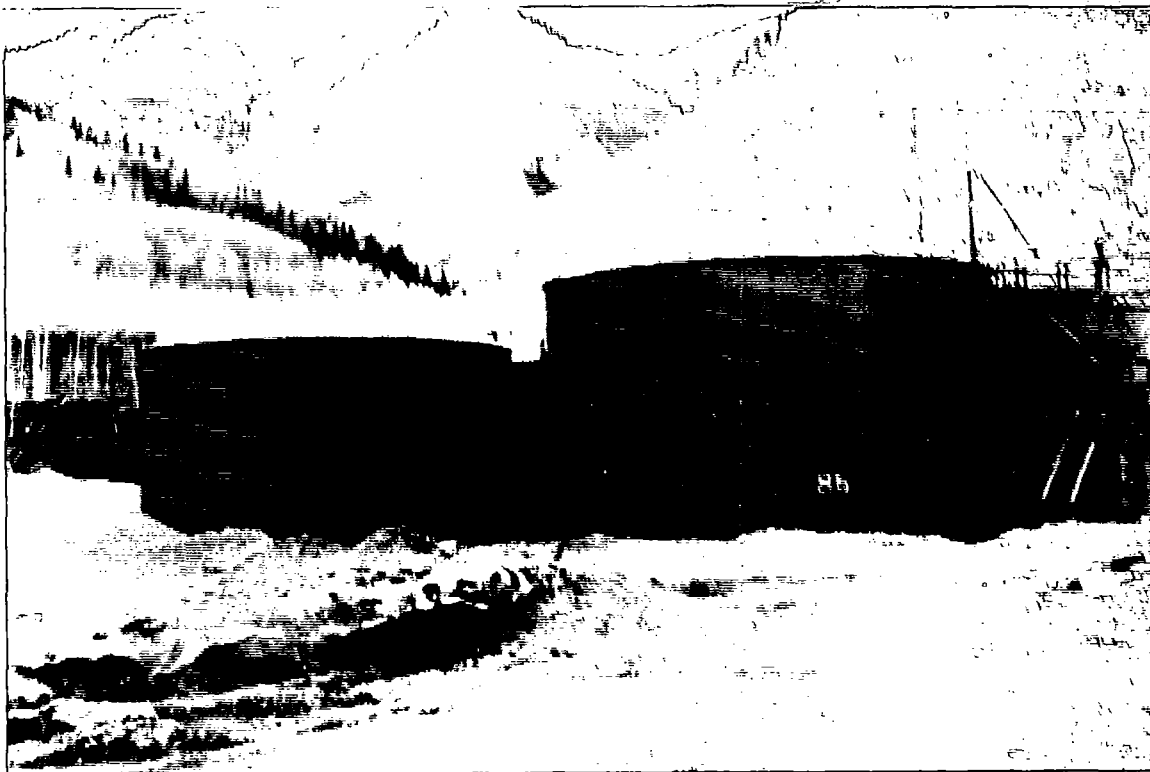


PHOTO 13: STORAGE TANKS FOR INACTIVE SULFURIC ACID PLANT IN DOLORES RIVER AREA.

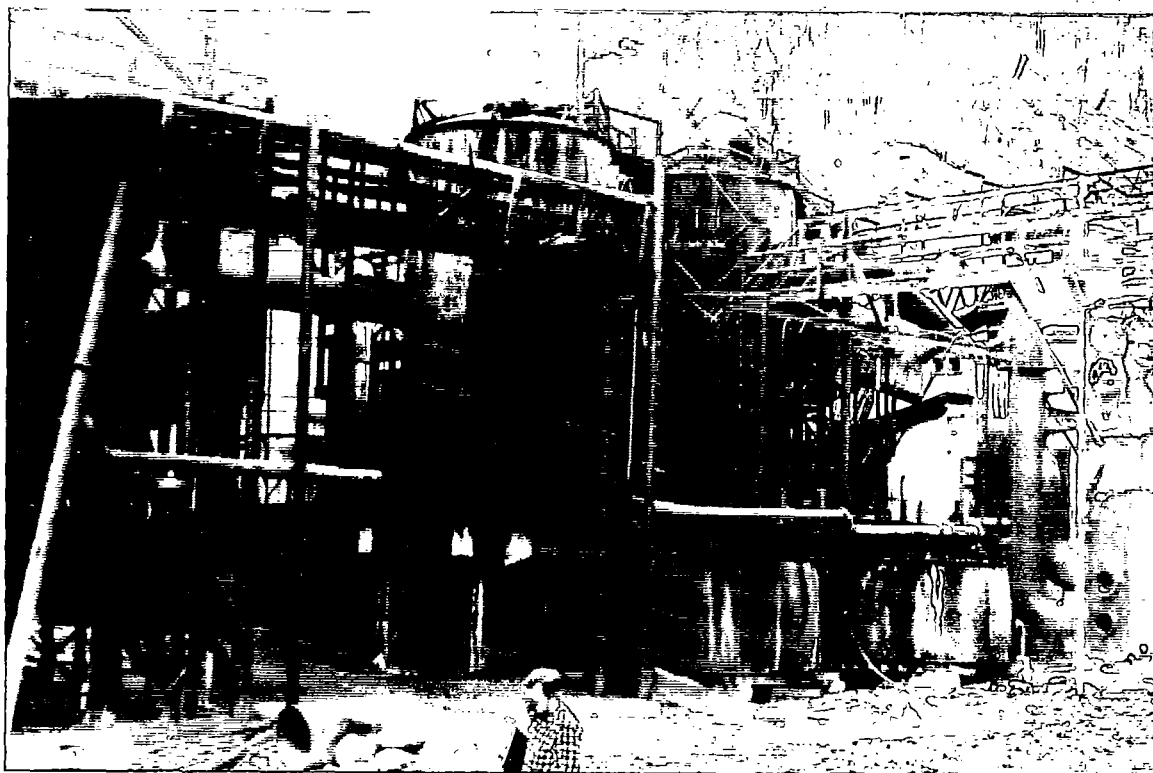


PHOTO 14: THE INACTIVE SULFURIC ACID PLANT. NOTE NUMEROUS DEAD TREES IN BACKGROUND.



PHOTO 15: CALCINE PONDS ON DOLORES RIVER BEING DREDGED.



PHOTO 16: TREATED MINE WATER BEING DISCHARGED INTO UPPER
SETTLING PONDS ON DOLORES RIVER.

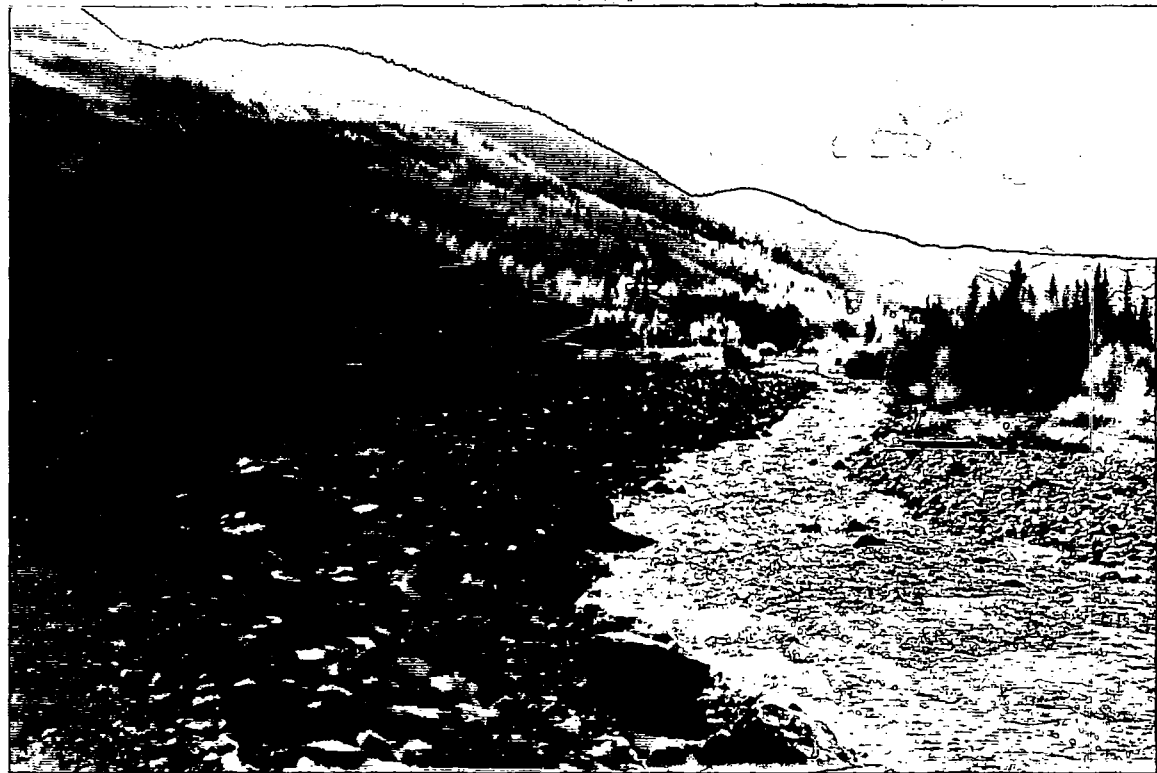


PHOTO 17: (ABOVE) BANK
STABILIZATION ON
DOLORRES RIVER OPPOSITE
LOWER SETTLING PONDS.

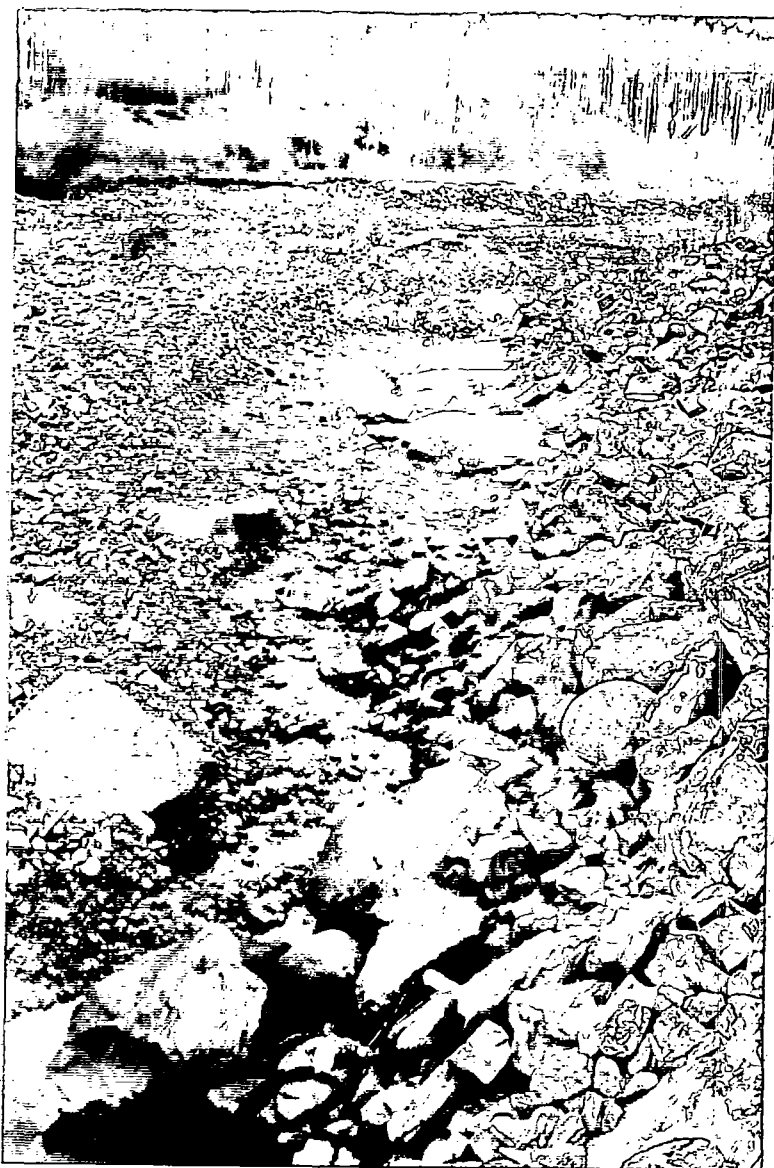


PHOTO 18: (RIGHT) IRON RICH
SEEPAGE FROM UPPER
CALCINE PONDS INTO
DOLORRES RIVER.



PHOTO 19: SILVER CREEK MERGING INTO THE DOLORES RIVER.